

Filed for intro on 02/25/2002

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 562
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Tia Sillers and Mark D. Sanders, writers of the contemporary classic song, "I Hope You Dance."

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those fine Tennesseans who bring the joys of artistic expression and culture to the citizens of this state; and

WHEREAS, Tia Sillers and Mark D. Sanders are two such estimable individuals who have reached the very pinnacle of the songwriting profession; through application of their tremendous talents, they have made substantial contributions to the musical heritage of this state and its Capital City; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, these two gifted musicians collaborated to bring the world "I Hope You Dance," a song that has brought Ms. Sillers and Mr. Sanders much acclaim by attaining a level of success that has rarely been equaled in the rich history of country music; and

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WHEREAS, the song's remarkable run has been precipitated by its singular ability to reach to the very core of people from all walks of life, relating to their experiences and capturing their hearts and minds; and

WHEREAS, the inspirational lyrics of "I Hope You Dance" are as follows:

*I hope you never lose your sense of wonder
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger
May you never take one single breath for granted
God forbid love ever leave you empty-handed*

*I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance*

*I hope you dance, I hope you dance
Time is a wheel in constant motion
Always rolling us along
Tell me who wants to look back on their youth and wonder
Where those years have gone*

*I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance
Never settle for the path of least resistance
Livin' might mean taking chances if they're worth takin'
Lovin' might be a mistake but it's worth makin'*

*Don't let some hell-bent heart leave you bitter
When you come close to sellin' out reconsider
Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance
And when you get the chance to sit it out or dance*

*I hope you dance, I hope you dance
Time is a wheel in constant motion
Always rolling us along
Tell me who wants to look back on their youth and wonder
Where those years have gone*

; and

WHEREAS, powerfully sung by Lee Ann Womack, who was accompanied by the gifted vocalists Sons of the Desert, the song's music, lyrics and message will be cherished by many generations to come; and

WHEREAS, "I Hope You Dance" has demonstrated a unique ability to speak to people in many different situations and places; it has been used as an inspirational theme for the

University of Florida Gators and the Flagstaff, Arizona Police Department and in countless graduation ceremonies and memorial Web sites; and

WHEREAS, the song was sung at the Columbine High School memorial service and the Pulitzer Prize ceremony, and it was signed at a hearing-impaired conference; and

WHEREAS, “I Hope You Dance” has achieved widespread and lasting success, reaching the Top 20 on the Pop charts and becoming a No.1 hit on the Adult Contemporary Chart and the Country Chart, where it held the top spot for six weeks; and

WHEREAS, the song has been honored with the music industry's most prestigious awards, including the 2001 Grammy Award for Best Country Song, 2001 BMI Country Song of the Year, 33rd Robert J. Burton Most Performed Country Song of the Year, 2001 ASCAP Song of the Year, 2001 Academy of Country Music Song of the Year, 2001 CMA Song of the Year, 2000-2001 NSAI Song of the Year Award, 2000-2001 NSAI Songwriter Achievement Award, and 2000 CMA Single of the Year; and

WHEREAS, powered by the success of “I Hope You Dance,” Lee Ann Womack’s album featuring the song has reached double platinum status, selling more than two million units; this tremendous success led Ms. Sillers and Mr. Sanders to author a book of poems and writings inspired by the song, and the book reached the *New York Times* Bestseller List; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Sillers and Mr. Sanders first collaborated on “I Ain’t Goin’ Nowhere” before penning the song which has become their milestone achievement; however, they have each previously experienced the highest level of musical success; and

WHEREAS, a native of California, Mark D. Sanders has been living in Nashville for more than two decades; after moving to Tennessee as a former surfer determined to be a songwriter, he became one of the most successful songwriters of the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, he has written more than a dozen number one songs for such gifted recording artists as Tracy Lawrence, John Anderson, Chris Ledoux, Garth Brooks, John Michael Montgomery, Neal McCoy, Reba McEntire, Faith Hill, Lonestar, George Strait, Ricochet, Rhett

Atkins, and Trace Adkins; Mr. Sanders' lyrics have also been sung by many other artists, including Rick Trevino, Tracy Byrd, Jo Dee Messina, Paul Brandt, Sammy Kershaw, Wade Hayes, Diamond Rio, Toby Keith, Patty Loveless, and Bobby Eakes; and

WHEREAS, also an entrepreneur, he created Mark D. Music in conjunction with Starstruck Writer's Group; that catalog and his Soda Creek Songs are now part of Universal Music Group, where he writes; and

WHEREAS, an active and invaluable member of his profession and his community, he serves on the boards of Leadership Music, The Ulster Project, and High Hopes; each year, he and Tim Nichols sponsor "Hats Off to High Hopes," a benefit that has raised more than \$250,000 for a therapeutic pre-school for special-needs children; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sanders has received numerous honors, including being selected as Writer of the Year by ASCAP, the Nashville Songwriter's Association, *Billboard*, *Music Row Magazine*, and *American Songwriter*; he has also won four CMA Triple Play Awards; and

WHEREAS, his professional excellence aside, Mr. Sanders is most grateful for the deep love and companionship he shares with his wife, Cindy, and their five children; and

WHEREAS, Tia Sillers is a native of Nashville; she was first exposed to songwriting as a teenager, when she lived next door to Dave Innis, a former member of Restless Heart; she had the opportunity to learn the craft from such great songwriters as Dave Loggins, Don Schlitz, Bill LaBounty, and Becky Forster; and

WHEREAS, though she has always loved the art of songwriting, she did not originally set out to make it her career; she attended the prestigious University of North Carolina, where she earned undergraduate degrees in English and Fine Arts and a Master's degree in Business Communication; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Sillers returned to Nashville after earning her degrees; while home, she went to the Bluebird Café with her mother to hear Don Schlitz and was inspired to try her hand at songwriting; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, she signed with Collins Music, and since that time she has become one of country music's hottest songwriters; she has penned Top 5 hits for Pam Tillis and George Ducas, and her song, "There's Your Trouble" reached the top of the charts for the Dixie Chicks; and

WHEREAS, Tia Sillers has displayed a rare ability to transcend the boundaries between genres; the song "Blue on Black," performed by the Kenny Wayne Shepherd and co-written with her husband, Mark Selby, held the top position on the rock charts for seventeen weeks and was the 1998 *Billboard* Rock Song of the Year; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a consummate professional, Ms. Sillers is a wonderful and caring friend and citizen who devotes much of her time and talent to helping others and a loving wife to Mark Selby; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Sillers and Mr. Sanders, both of whom now reside in Nashville, are individually among the elite songwriters in country music and the world; when they combined their considerable talents, they produced a song which holds a singular position in country music history; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Tia Sillers and Mark D. Sanders, acknowledging their remarkable records of achievement and their wonderful song, "I Hope You Dance," which has earned the approbation of music lovers from all walks of life, inspired applause from the music industry of our nation, and brought honor to Music City, U.S.A. and to the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we extend to Ms. Sillers and Mr. Sanders our best wishes for much happiness and continued success in their respective careers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

